

CONTRIBUTIONS TO OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY. By V. N. Shirodkar, M.D.(Bonn), F.R.C.S.(Eng.), F.A.C.S. (Pp. 167; figs. 200. 37s. 6d.) Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1960.

The name of Shirodkar seems likely to go down in medical history as a synonym for the procedure invented and developed by this ingenious operator for the treatment of habitual abortion due to incompetence of the internal cervical os. The first chapter of this book, entitled "Habitual Abortion in the Second Trimester," should therefore prove of the greatest interest and practical value to all gynaecologists.

Like all good operations this procedure is simple and safe to perform. It consists of encircling the cervix in the vicinity of the weakness with one or other of a variety of non-absorbable suture materials. Currently, Shirodkar himself is using mersilene, instead of a fascial strip as formerly, and he is experimenting with two polyethylene beads fixed on the circlet posteriorly. This, he hopes, will allow temporary division during abortion or labour and facilitate simple reconstitution subsequently. Contrary to general belief, he prefers to operate in the non-pregnant state once the diagnosis is confirmed.

The second chapter is devoted largely to what the author calls his "Extended Manchester Operation." Since this is designed to avoid amputation of the cervix, always regarded as an essential part of that procedure, the use of this title must find justification in the substitution of the uterosacral ligaments plus a strip of overlying peritoneum for the traditional shortening of the cardinal ligaments à la Fothergill. These strips are cut after opening the Pouch of Douglas and inspecting them between the operator's finger and thumb, they are then crossed in front of the cervix and stitched to it. For those younger women for whom a repair procedure is imperative without losing the cervix and imperilling future childbearing this may well prove a useful variation. One cannot see it displacing the standard procedure so well established in this country. The companion to this, Shirodkar's Fascial Sling operation for Genital Prolapse, is designed for those whose uterosacral ligaments appear inadequate, or for failed cases, and is a splendid example of his ingenuity. Its singular lack of simplicity is, however, likely to deprive it of general popularity.

Shirodkar has had opportunities for the study of the surgery of blocked fallopian tubes such as are granted to few. He has made good use of these and has devised not only one of the best techniques now available but also a range of special instruments for tubo-uterine implantation.

For the construction of an artificial vagina he also describes a new technique utilising the sigmoid colon. This, he claims, gives a result less liable to cicatricial contracture and other occasional drawbacks of the current solutions to this problem.

The last section of the book contains a kind of lucky dip selection of the author's experiences and published papers. One of interest to the obstetrician is his method of reducing puerperal inversion of the uterus. This consists of pushing it back with a roll of packing gauze gripped in a swab holding forceps. This he has done on five occasions and so has a better score than most, which must make his method worth remembering.

In conclusion one cannot give too high praise to the author's clarity of exposition which is enhanced by excellent line drawings and then followed by superb serial photographs plus equally clear captions. This is the kind of book that "he who runs may read" and moreover understand.

W. R. S.

DISEASE IN INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD. By R. W. B. Ellis, O.B.E., M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P. (Pp. 714; illustrations 301. 55s.). Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone 1960.

THE first edition of Professor Ellis' textbook was published in 1951. The general format is retained in this, the third edition. The text has been thoroughly revised and brought up to date, and so have the bibliographical references at the end of each chapter. The work is beautifully and instructively illustrated—many of the 301 illustrations are in colour.

This well established book is easy to read and provides a lucid and stimulating exposition of the subject. It is certain to remain one of the most popular of paediatric textbooks. J. J. C.